

Message Text

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SUBJECT: SEJM RESOLUTION ON EDUCATIONAL REFORM

1. POLISH SEJM ON OCT. 13 UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED RESOLUTION ON REFORM OF NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM BASED ON FAR-REACHING PROPOSALS OF "REPORT ON THE STATE OF EDUCATION IN THE PRL" RELEASED LAST MAY. REPORT IS THE WORK OF COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS LED BY PROFESSOR JAN SZCZEPANSKI WHICH WAS FORMED IN JAN. 1971 AT THE INSTIGATION OF PZPR POLITBURO. ITS BASIC CONCEPT IS ESTABLISHMENT OF A TEN-YEAR GENERAL SCHOOL LEADING ALTERNATIVELY TO VOCATIONAL TRAINING OR TO UNIVERSITY (EITHER DIRECTLY OR FOLLOWING TWO YEARS OF ADDITIONAL PREPARATION.) SEJM CONVENED WITH MUCH FANFARE ON THE EVE OF THE TWO-HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF POLAND'S ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMISSION OF NATIONAL EDUCATION, THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN EUROPE.

2. SEJM RESOLUTION CHARGES GOVERNMENT WITH PRESENTATION OF FORMAL LEGISLATIVE PROPOSAL BY THE END OF 1975 TO IMPLEMENT THE REFORMS. IT STRESSES REFORMS' SOCIALIST ASPECTS, POSITING AS AN IMPORTANT GOAL, FOR EXAMPLE, DEMOCRATIZATION OF SCHOOLING TO ASSURE CHILDREN OF WORKERS AND PEASANTS ACCESS TO HIGHEST EDUCATION. APPEALING FOR SUPPORT OF ENTIRE NATION, RESOLUTION DECLARES SUPPORT OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM TO BE A MORAL
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OBLIGATION FOR ALL INDIVIDUALS AND INSTITUTIONS INVOLVED

IN EDUCATIONAL PROCESS--REGARDLESS OF THEIR OWN VIEW-POINTS.

3. SPEAKERS DURING DISCUSSION OF RESOLUTION LIKEWISE UNDERScoreD IT AS MAJOR EFFORT OF SOCIALIST POLAND. FRANCISZEK SZLACHCIC, FOR EXAMPLE, LAUDED HISTORIC NATIONAL EDUCATION COMMISSION BUT POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS NOT UNTIL THE PRL THAT WORK HAS BEGUN TOWARD ACHIEVING ITS FAR-REACHING AIMS. ADDITIONALLY, SZLACHCIC, IN A PROBABLE REFERENCE TO CHURCH OPPOSITION TO SOME RAMIFICATIONS OF THE REFORM PROPOSALS, CITED OPPOSITION OF CONSERVATIVE FORCES BUT EMPHASIZED THAT "WE ARE TRYING TO GET SUPPORTERS FOR OUR EFFORT....FOR IT DEALS WITH THE WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE, THE GOOD OF POLAND". WHOEVER CARES FOR THIS, HE CONTINUED, MUST BE WITH US AND MUST UNDERSTAND MUR GOALS.

4. COMMENT: IN OPTING FOR THE 10-YEAR CONCEPT, THE SEJM HAS CHOSEN WHAT APPEARS TO BE THE MOST AMBITIOUS OF THE SZCZEPANSKI REPORT ALTERNATIVES, AND THE REGIME CLEARLY HAS A GREAT TASK AHEAD OF IT. MAJOR DISCUSSION OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REFORMS, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS CENTERED AROUND THE PREREQUISITE OF IMPROVING TEACHER TRAINING TO PROVIDE SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF QUALIFIED TEACHERS TO OPERATE THE NEW SYSTEM. WORK HAS ALREADY BEGUN ON THE INTRODUCTION OF A GMINA COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL SYSTEM IN THE COUNTRY-SIDE, WHICH WILL BECOME THE BASIS OF THE TEN-YEAR GENERAL SCHOOL THERE. HOWEVER, THE TWO-YEAR DEADLINE FOR ENACTMENT OF FORMAL LEGISLATION PROMULGATING THE REFORMS WILL NOT ALLOW MUCH BREATHING ROOM.

5. THE CHURCH'S ROLE UNDER THE NEW SYSTEM IS STILL IN DOUBT. THE CHURCH IS CONCERNED THAT INCREASED CLASSROOM HOURS WILL JEOPARDIZE CATECHISM. THE REPORT CONTAINS NO MENTION OF THE CHURCH WHATSOEVER, AND, WITH A COUPLE EXCEPTION, THE CHURCH WAS MENTIONED ONLY OBLIQUELY IN THE SEJM DISCUSSIONS. PAX REPRESENTATIVE BOLESŁAW PIASECKI, REMARKING THAT MOST PRIESTS TODAY HAVE BEEN RAISED IN SOCIALIST POLAND, DECLARED THAT IN THE SENSE OF MORAL UPBRINGING THE CHURCH HAS A CONTINUING ROLE TO

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PLAY WITHIN THE SOCIALIST FRAMEWORK. A ZNAK DEPUTY ALSO EXPRESSED HIS CONVICTION THAT THE REFORMS COULD BE ORGANIZED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO ALLOW CATECHISM FOR THOSE WHO WANT IT.

6. THE CHURCH ITSELF IN LATE SEPTEMBER ADDRESSED TO THE SEJM A "DECLARATION" OF ITS POSITION CONCERNING THE REFORMS. THE DECLARATION INDICATED, AND CHURCH OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD US THAT, THE CHURCH HOPES THAT ULTIMATE LEGIS-

LATION ON THE REFORMS WILL CONTAIN SOME RECOGNITION OF
THE RIGHT OF FAMILIES TO SEEK, AND FOR THE CHURCH TO
PROVIDE, RELIGIOUS TRAINING FOR CHILDREN.
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